

Beast of no nation

By: Jeffrey Carter

Chapter 1: Independence

My name is Maik Vongvilay and this is my story. I was born in 1943 October 24th in a city called Xieng Khouang. I grew up in a small rundown village in the Peak District, I was the son of two peasant farmers who grew rice and had to do whatever to stay afloat so that I wouldn't lose everything I had.

It was 1954, the French had lost the Indochina War so they pulled out of the region, and Laos gained its independence but with that came a price, a huge price at that, A civil war. It was November 6th, and I heard Pathet Lao, the communist side of Laos, was coming towards our city. I told my parents that they should leave while they could because I heard that the U.S. was bombing where they thought the communists were hiding. It was strangely quiet when my parents left. I had already packed what I needed to survive until I heard voices and footsteps outside my house. I quickly went to my dad's gun locker, grabbed an m19, and quietly walked to the back of the house to see if they had already passed the back. I slightly opened the back door and a bullet whizzed past my ear grazing it. I quickly ran into a room with no windows as people started shouting and entering my home and then bullets started to go off, darting through the house and going through my walls leaving holes in it. I heard Vietnamese and English voices shouting so I took the chance to run away and bullets started to fly past me. I went into the jungle but a U.S. soldier followed me.

“STOP! Put your hands up,” the U.S. soldier said as he pointed his gun at me. I dropped my m19 and put my hands up.

“I'm... a civilian,” I said in broken English.

The soldier moved closer to me. “If you are a civilian why did you run away and why do you have a gun??”

“protection... against the communists,” I said calmly not to show fear

“Come towards me, you're coming with us,” he said angrily. I walked toward him calmly and I was within arm's distance of him I was waiting for his guard to drop

Another U.S soldier came

“Billy hurry up were retreating”

The U.S. soldier looked back to respond but I took advantage, grabbing his gun and shooting him and his friend. I returned to my backpack and picked it up with my pistol before entering the harsh jungle.

Chapter 2: guerrilla warfare

It's been 2 days since I have been in the jungle, I've been wandering around trying to find this river that would take me to my parents I've been hiding in trees and bushes avoiding the communists and the U.S soldiers I arrived in an another abandoned village scavenged through the houses and I found some fresh food and bullets holes in the houses with a smell of fresh gunpowder which meant that the communist or the U.S soldiers were nearby maybe both I continued to search the building to look for more resources when all of a sudden I heard a click and a voice.

“Who are you? Why are you here?”

I dropped the rope I was grabbing

“Maik Vongvilay”

“Wait, you're my cousin?”

“Who are you?”

“Im Songxia Vongsay”

I stand up and turn around

“Wait you're my cousin from Paksan what are you doing in Phonsavan”

My cousin puts the pistol back on his waist

“War traveled from Paksan to here and I need to go Chaing Rai to escape”

“I do too my parents are over there but the war is all around us we need to find a path to it”

“I have a map but we would have to follow the river to Chaing Rai”

“Let's get going then”

I pick up the rope and put it in my backpack.

We headed straight north following the river from Muang Kam to Sop Lao. We talked about our life stories, what we did as children, what girls we liked and what was our favorite food. We Became really good friends y'know until we ran into the Vietcong

My cousin was talking until I spotted something

“Shhh,” I said as I put my hand up and stopped”

“What is it” my cousin whispered

“Vietnamese” I whispered back

“Let's move around them,” I said as we slowly moved around their camp.

Just when we were almost out of the camp sight I hit a wire trap the sound of cans rattling alerted the Viet Cong and within moments were getting shot at. I grabbed my cousin and we ran as bullets whizzed by us. I could feel something warm fall down my arm but I didn't have time to react or look at it. We were being chased so we pulled out our pistols and shot back. I killed one of them chasing us but there were still more. We split up and used the trees to our advantage. We quickly made work of them and then headed back in the direction of the river.

“ Did I get shot?” I asked

“Yeah I think so,” he said

“Where?” I asked again

“Your arm looks like it got grazed though”

I take out a first aid kit and open it.

“Here pour it on there”

Gives him alcohol”

I wince as he pours the alcohol on my arm

“Wrap my arm please”

I gave him the bandages to wrap my arm

“Thank you”

“No problem let's go now”

Chapter 3: crossfire

It had been two weeks since then we ran into countless soldiers and communists we had gone from Sop Lao to Muang Xai the journey had already been rough but it was tougher when we ran out of food last week we came across an abandoned camp and scavenged anything from there we found left behind MRE a case of pistol bullets and a telescope.

“Why did they leave all this stuff behind,” my cousin asked

“Good question let's not find out and leave”

“Wait”

I heard helicopters and English in the distance and then I realized we were in the middle between the communists and the English.

“RUN!”

As we ran I heard bullets and bombs start to go within a second. Each side was bombing each other and shooting each other. The bombs started to get closer to us. I felt a warm hot liquid run down my leg. I knew I was shot but I kept running.

“ARE YOU OKAY?”

“YEA KEEP RU-”

A bomb exploded near us or so I thought

When I looked back to see if my cousin was ok his body was in pieces, the ground stained with red and organs and my cousin was lifeless.

I had no time to be in shock or sorrow as this was a life-and-death situation. I tried to shake off the ringing in my ears and my disorientation.

I stumble across the field layed with ditches from where bombs went off and fell into a Viet Cong tunnel

I grabbed my pistol and a flashlight and made my way through the tunnel quietly because I didn't know if there was anyone in there or not. I saw a small light at the end of the tunnel.

I made my way to the door opening it slowly only to see a guard outside of it.

I quickly jumped out of it and tackled the guard. I threw punches at his face and he threw me off him and grabbed his knife, I quickly pulled out my pistol and shot him in the head.

Chapter 4: Chaing rai

It had been 2 months since I lost my cousin to the war. I struggled to cope with his death as it affected me a lot along my journey from Muang Xai to Huay Xai when I went to sleep. His death repeated in my head over and over in a cycle of repeating tonight.

I slept in a tree this particular night as I was close to the river but this night was strange. I couldn't sleep, something felt. **Off.** I stayed awake pondering my thoughts when sunrise came.

I looked at my surroundings before coming down the tree and ate the last bit of food I had before swimming across this river. After that, I approached the river and the current looked tough. I took off my shirt and dived into the river that was dragging me but I refused to drown I fought the river with all my might but I only came halfway I thought of my dad, my mom, and my cousin and it boosted me giving me the strength to get across the river I pulled myself up onto the grass and laid there tired my eyes were heavy and I couldn't keep them and then I had passed out.

When I woke up I was in the back of a wagon. I looked around my surroundings before asking.

“Who are you”

“ do not worry about that you are safe with me”

“ Where are you taking me?”

“ a refugee camp south of where I found you”

“Why?”

“Not many make it out of Laos like you did you must have quite a journey”

“I guess I did”

We arrived at the refugee camp after our small talk I went and registered in the camp and started to explore what the camp had for me I took notice of the gates and how they were placed they were heavily guarded 4 guards on each 3 gates with bulletproof vests and ak 47s there were food markets in the center and how people were waiting to go to the united states I eventually went to my tent to settle down and go to sleep.

The next day when I woke I went to the bathroom and took a shower that was much needed. I went to a nearby water source and washed my clothes, I returned shortly to my tent and cleaned it up after that I went to go talk to my neighbor.

“How long have you been here?”

“About three weeks waiting to go to the United States?”

“What's the usual wait time?”

“About a month or two?

“oh that's long”

There was an announcement of the people who were going to the States surprisingly I was one of the few on the boat when I got on the boat noticed the people first Asians of all sorts Chinese, Vietnamese, Laos, and Japanese, and then the boat, the boat was packed to its fullest I knew this trip was going to be bad but I was not prepared for what was going to come.

On the first week on the boat, it was vicious feeling hungry all the time the smell of not having showered people fighting, and people dying on the boat i got used to it but it was not normal at all but sometimes you have to get used to the obstacles in your way.

“Mommy I'm hungry,” a small frail child said

“It's ok we only have a week left on this boat,” the mother said

I didn't want the child to be starving or in pain so I handed the last bit of food I had to the child

“Here eat”

“oh no it's okay you don't have to,” the mother said

“It's okay I have more,” I said to the mother

“Thank you, sir,” the child said

“No problem,” I said

A week later the ship arrived in America when we got off the boat I noticed the difference between the united states and Laos America was more like a desert and unlike Laos where trees and forests bloomed I also noticed the white men and a checkpoint when I looked around I saw all the white men in fancy suits and us asain in raggedy old clothes I also noticed how they were beating on the Asians calling them chinks as they beat them up. When I passed the checkpoint I was greeted by an Asian man in a fancy suit.

“Welcome to San Fransico”

The end.

